

Architectonics of McDonald's Cohabitation with Wal-Mart: An Exploratory study of Ethnocentricity.

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Abstract

Architectonics is proposed as a dialogic theory and method to research three discursive spheres: McDonald's corporation, McDonaldization, and McDonaldland. Architectonics has three meanings: the philosophy of systematizing knowledge, the science of architecture, and the structure of the symphony. Bakhtin proposed it as a new method for the human sciences, one that interanimates cognitive with ethical and aesthetic systemness. This essay develops it further, and applies it to the study of globalization and localization of McDonald's and Wal-Mart corporations, which now cohabits one another in New Mexico (and elsewhere). A general inquiry system is suggested as a framework to analyze the architectonics of other organizations, in future international studies.

INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTONICS

When McDonald's moved into two Wal-Mart superstores in Las Cruces, New Mexico, we decided to take a look. Using Bakhtin's (1968, 1981, 1984, 1986, & 1990) language philosophy, we examine three discursive spheres: McDonald's corporate strategy-speak (Boje, Driver & Cai, 2004), McDonaldland fantasy narration (Boje & Cai, 2004; Boje & Rhodes, 2005), and McDonaldization of society (Ritzer, 1993/2002). Our aim in this essay is to develop a languaged theory of two dominant global organizational systems, Wal-Mart and McDonald's muscling their way into our hometown. This languaged system theory is what Mikhail Bakhtin (1986, 1990) terms "architectonics."

Bakhtin (1986) is a critical theorist, who writes a few neo-Marxist notes on architectonics in his school boyish notebook in a section titled: "Toward a Methodology of the Human Sciences." While never explicitly defining it, Bakhtin seems to mean it as artistic, knowledge, and philosophical utterance. Bakhtin (1981: 98) in *Dialogic Imagination* uses the term differently to be the architectonics of plot line, where an organizational meeting can fulfill "architectonic functions: it can serve as an opening, sometimes as a culmination, even as a denouement (a finale) of the plot". In his earliest

work (Bakhtin, 1990, written in 1920s) architectonic is a type of dialogism, the interanimation of three discourses: cognitive, ethics, and aesthetics. Bakhtin was not the first to evoke the term. Architectonics was first used by Immanuel Kant (1781/1900: 466) in *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant (1781/1900: 466) says “by the term *Architectonic* I mean the art of constructing a system” (italics in original). But, for Kant, constructing system was exclusively a cognitive discourse. Bakhtin (1990) moves away from Kant’s focus on architectonics as “systematic unity” and Kant’s definition of system as “the unity of various cognitions under one idea” (Kant, 1781/1900: 466). In Bakhtinian language theory, there are a multiplicity of discourses (cognitive, as well as aesthetics and ethics), and a heterogeneity of languages, each conveying alternative logics and ideologies.

Specifically, cognitive knowledge and ideological perspective is expressed in language. Such language ranges from written and spoken words to architecture, décor and gestures. Ethics is a narrow definition for Bakhtin, the answerability of languaged system; who is answerable for the system that has been consummated?

Aesthetic, for Bakhtin, is not about beauty. Rather, aesthetics is how sometimes chaotic elements are shaped into a whole, or in his terms, how elements are consummated into a whole that has some systematicity. This last word is very important. He doesn’t mean system as a static phenomenon, nor is a system viewable from one language or one perspective, and it is never system, but systemness, or systematicity that Bakhtin discusses. Bakhtin (1990) usually uses the words unfinalizedness or unmergedness when exploring architectonics of systematicity. For Bakhtin (1990), the three discourses (cognitive knowledge, ethical, and aesthetics) are in dynamic interanimated relationship; each animates the other two.

While Bakhtin does not develop a full-blown system theory of organizations, his outlines of systematicity, and the four types of actors, gives us a way to proceed. Authors are people who script discourse, who create new words in discourse for others to narrate. Beholders are looking, listening, touching and otherwise sensing this various modes of language ranging from reading annual reports, being bombarded by advertising in an organization, to the kinds of art and architecture a company uses to persuade employees and consumers of its wealth and status. Characters such as managers, employees, and

customers are depicted in corporate discourse and also express in verbal and non-verbal speech acts the lines others have authored and scripted. Directors orchestrate the types of language employed in various contexts; coach everyone from executives to employees on how to perform their scripts and narratives. There are always a multiplicity of scripts and a multitude of authors, beholders, characters, and directors such that the languaged systemics are never finalized, always in revision, and there is an unmergedness of the plurality of perspectives and languages.

Here a concrete example is appropriate. Mc Donald's global corporate strategy is called *Go Active!* (Kapica, 2004: slide 17): "To be the leading restaurant promoting healthy, happy, active lifestyles everywhere we do business." The basis of the strategy, in cognitive terms, is to convince consumers that eating fast food is compatible with active lifestyle, fitness, and balanced nutrition. Aesthetically, those cognitive declarations are expressed artistically in pictures of athletes, launching new shows starring the clown Ronald McDonald who is doing fitness work outs, scientific charts about fat and calorie content on brochures and trayliners, and pictures of Bob Greene, always with the caption of Ophra Winfrey on ads, Adult Happy Meal containers, etc. Just to amplify; the juxtaposition of Bob Greene with Oprah can be misconstrued as an endorsement by the popular TV personality of what Green is saying about McDonald's.

It is unlikely that this is the case. April 15, 1996 Ophra Winfrey made a despairing remark about hamburgers, for which she and her guest were sued. Her talk show guest was Howard Lyman, a Texas cattleman speaking about Mad Cow disease.

Oprah: Now see, wait a minute, wait a minute. Let me just ask you this right now Howard. How do you know the cows are ground up and fed back to the other cows?

Howard: Oh, I've seen it. These are U.S.D.A. statistics; they're not something we're making up.

Oprah: Now doesn't that concern you all a little bit, right here, hearing that?

Audience: Yeah!

Oprah: It has just stopped me cold from eating another burger!

Audience: (Claps loudly and shouts) yeah!ⁱ

Sales of hamburgers in America plummeted after Oprah's remark. Oprah and Lyman were sued, because in Texas any remark that lowers the sales of the beef industry is culpable; she was held answerable for the economic consequences of her remark, not whether they were true or untrue. This raises ethical questions in brochures we find in almost any McDonalds that depict images of Bob Greene, and scientific tables about nutrition, advice to parents and their children about balanced lifestyles, coloring books where Ronald's leads children in various exercises, and the frequent mention of opinion-leader, Oprah Winfrey. One ethical question is: Has McDonald's narrated Oprah recanting her claim to millions of viewers that she is stopped cold from eating another burger, because beef is being fed to beef, and that can lead to Mad Cow disease (Best, 2001)? The architectonics, here, is defined as the interplay of cognitive declarations, aesthetic images, and ethical answers, as in these examples of talk show hosts, and corporate implications of health and fitness value to fast food that border on the white lie.

Literature Review

The architectonic analysis of organizations is our contribution, to address symbolism and language as components of the organizing process that Pondy (1976), then Pondy and Mitroff (1979) called for, to move beyond the cybernetics of 'open system theory' (level 4) to the upper regions of Kenneth Boulding's (1956) more complex language and system based system models (levels 5 thru 9). Our focus is on languaged systems, their discursive and social practices, to supplant information processing open system models wedded to sender-receiver, and feedback loop communication models (Cooper, 1989). Our challenge is that instead of a solitary bystander (theorist) assuming one language, their own, in constructing an open system model, we seek to move beyond this monophonic and monological device to the polyphonic, more accurately, architectonic systematicity of unfinalizedness, a much more dynamic approach.

Ours is part of a larger project, making the linguistic turn to open system theory (Boje, 2005b); how a corporation such as McDonald's, engage a multiplicity of languages, organize their dialogic architectonic system, and becomes embroiled in answering its critics (e.g.; Best, 2001; Lyman & Mercer, 1998; Ritzer, 1993/2002). One

principle of the architectonic system is metamorphic cycle of stylistic lines transformation; another is, counterposing *official* monologism with other logics and ideologies, such that we can craft an inquiry into heteroglossic differences (Boje & Cai, 2004; Boje & Al Arkoubi, 2005; Boje & Rhodes, 2005). That principle is used for the authors to de-center several meanings of McDonald's speech acts. The theory of heteroglossia (centripetal-integrating and centrifugal-disintegrating forces) is used to demonstrate the dialectics of the system (i.e. the second cybernetic theory of deviation-counteracting & deviation-amplification). For example, the centering language of globalization becomes de-centered by the heteroglossic (centrifugal) forces of localization (putting new spin on global terms and their situated local practices). It is argued that there is an inevitable decay and daily death of corporation language, as the globally distributed McDonald's languages undergo a de-centering in localized parody, restylization in a process described by Bakhtin (1981, 1984) as social heteroglossia. The strategic language practices of McDonald's also ensure that the meanings of the McWords do not become decentered by words such as McJOB. McJOB, for example, was McDonald's word to mean the employment of the handi-capable in fast food jobs. Then, the term 'McJob' was re-coined by the Canadian novelist Douglas Coupland in his 1991 novel *Generation X* to describe (p. 5) as "A low-pay, low-prestige, low-dignity, low-benefit, no-future job in the service sector frequently considered a satisfying career choice by people who have never held one." Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 112) make the point that discourses is never safe from foreign or external elements which is called surplus (or residue of elements); Bakhtin (1990) also refers to the surplus meaning that heteroglossic forces of language dialogize.

To put it succinctly, Bakhtin theorized at least four types of dialogism. Polyphonic dialogism has been applied to organization change (Hazen, 1993), and can be defined as fully-embodied discourse, where author and characters fully engage one another from their respective logics and ideological perspectives (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984). Second is stylistics (Bakhtin, 1981), based upon an essay about the interrelationship of different kinds of speech acts: skaz (the use of informal speech such as Nike's 'just do it' to narrate corporate image), direct speech (such as an executive letter to shareholders), scientific speech (such as McDonald's charts of cholesterol, fat, fiber, etc.), and various

modes of artistic speech (such as décor, architecture, etc. that is a mode of language expression, such as the wealth or ambiance of an organization); in all Bakhtin posits five types of stylistics that are in dialogic interrelationship. Third, is chronotopicity (Bakhtin, 1981), an essay on nine conceptualization of the relativity of time and space; four are about adventure (romantic, chivalric, everyday, & biographical); five are various aspects of folkloristics ranging from Rabelaisian, the masks of clown-fool-rogue, grotesque realism, all the way to idyllic preferences for here-and-now time in one's hometown; these nine are viewed as in dialogic relationship. Fourth, we assert is the architectonic dialogism (Bakhtin, 1990), the interanimation of three discourses (ethics, aesthetics, & cognitive). Finally, there is, of course, the interrelationship between the four orders of dialogism, which is a dialogism of the dialogisms of lower order system complexity, called "Polypi" (Boje, 2005a). We are not going to elaborate the theory further, as this is beyond the scope of the current essay; in include it so readers will know that there are at least five dialogisms that can take the field of organization studies beyond its fixation on level four open system theory. Our concern here is with the fourth dialogism, architectonic.

Architectonic dialogism will be full of individual, different, and unique participants' experiences. Organization participants are immersed in centrifugal (fragmenting) and centripetal (centering) language forces that characterize the circumstances in which they behave (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984). Furthermore, these participants co-exist in a variety of space and time conceptualizations, named by Bakhtin (1981) *chronotope* that impacts the participants' architectonic behavior. All this unique and individual participants engage in a polyphony of voices, and consequently, will create a juxtaposition of languages and chronotopic differences, that interact with architectonic dialogism.

Architectonic systematicity allows us to focus upon interrelationships among multiple consciousnesses where language consciousness expresses socio-linguistic embedded ideology in aesthetics, cognitive, and ethical discourses. Architectonics allows the simultaneity of more than two participants. Architectonics theorizes the struggle to consummate a whole out of the "potential chaos of parts" (Holquist, in Bakhtin 1990: xxiii). The use of architectonics to analyze organization system theories allows

combining artistic elements with more direct or more scientific speech acts. The movement of parts to wholes is also achieved aesthetically. The whole is a relative construct built from an aesthetic reaction that assembles all the cognitive-ethical determinations and valuations of the social system participants.

One criticism to the dialectic method is that it leads to a unified whole instead of a plurality of forces (Yazdanpour, 1998:3). Under the dialectic method, the ethical is implicit in the insistence of taking into account the material aspect of the reproduction of the life of a person (food, clothing, housing, education, etc). In opposition, dialogism is looking for co-experiencing, for being sympathetic to the other, for discovering the other through love, reciprocity and a through a process of *conscientization*. “While dialectics leads to self-discovery, dialogics leads to the discovery of the other; dialectics leads to a totalitarian system, dialogics to a democratic society” (Yazdanpour, 1998: 4).

Architectonic systematicity analysis can contribute to organizational systems theory by analyzing the multiplicity of languages and begin to ask questions about who is answerable for these systems, who are the authors, beholders, characters, and directors of these systems.

Through Bakhtin’s theory we can analyze organizational systems as non-rational aesthetical entities rather than just using rationalistic perspective of organization adapting to environmental turbulence (Emery & Trist, 1965; Emery, 1997). The application of Bakhtin’s concept of aesthetic is found in the literature of communication, in the work of DeGooyer. However, Bakhtin (1990) does not conceive aesthetics as a beautiful, graceful, elegant and sensuous perception, as DeGooyer (2003) asserts. DeGooyer (2003) analyzes one selected a-rational event in the organization, a process that he calls poignant organizing. Specifically, poignant organizing is the process of bringing together contrasting elements or fragments in an elegant manner at the opportune time to create a momentary whole in the organization, a “beautiful and a-rational event” (i.e., an episode) that will change the organization itself (DeGooyer, 2003: 3). This is not what Bakhtin (1990) is doing. For Bakhtin, there are simultaneous fragmenting and centering forces of language participants, and it is not about the aesthetics of beauty, it is the aesthetic question of who is shaping and being shaped by the consummation of disparate elements into attempts to become whole systems that are always unfinalized.

Furthermore, architectonic Bakhtin can be applied to analyze how corporations have authored a self image, a hero, a virtual leader, such as Ronald McDonald, in their effort to convince parents and children that eating fast (fatty) food is somehow nutritious and part of a healthy fitness lifestyle (Boje & Rhodes, 2005).

APPLICATION OF BAKHTIN'S THEORY TO MCDONALD'S & WAL-MART

McDonald's co-habitation with Wal-Mart will be analyzed with an architectonics perspective. We identify the authors, beholders, characters, and directors; as well as the architectonic systematicity. We mean this as a local case study, done by three Mexicans and one Anglo-American. We want to lay out a way to analyze corporate architectonics that we think can be used in other nations. We will demonstrate how to perform an architectonic analysis, and invite researchers in other nations to do so in their locale.

For analysis purposes using an architectonics perspective, McDonald's is divided into the three aesthetics spheres: (1) McDonald's corporation, (2) McDonaldland, and (3) McDonalization. Each sphere has individual cognitive-ethical-aesthetic attributes that consummate its expression. McDonald's corporation embraces the organizational structure, policies, norms, rules, objectives and economic activities in articulations of its corporate strategy, but does this through art, scientific-sounding discourse, and lots of skaz (Kapica, 2004). McDonald's corporation authors and directs the architectonics for characters to read lines corporately-crafted, and beholders to behold in ways that privilege corporate hegemony. McDonaldland is a fantasy land not only for children but for parents; it markets and advertises McDonald's ethical position with regard to Mad Cow disease, the fattening of Americans, and the export of Americana foodways and health-ways to the world. McDonaldland aesthetically, persuades readers (it hopes) through cartoonish characters, garish colors, and lyrical expression. Finally, McDonalization refers to all the social participation involved in introducing to McDonalds' organization a sense of responsibility and awareness for the customer's and other human resources, as a model for other organizations in society. Here, McDonaldization is part of the Wal-Mart sweatshop-produced fashion, a way of shopping that is being exported globally.

The architectonic method will be applied to our Las Cruces McDonald's, the way they took up residence in Wal-Mart. We will focus in particular, on the analysis of a

mural. Again, this is meant as a demonstration of the method, and can be replicated on murals elsewhere. For example, the lead author just returned from Copenhagen, where a McDonald's mural depicts Ronald, about to step off a Viking ship, and claim Denmark as McDonaldland.



Figure 1 – Mural at Copenhagen McDonald's – photo by lead author

The mural is part of the architecture, part of the textual dialogism, and created by McDonald's, along with other forms of texts to communicate itself with its existing and potential customers and employees. To continue with the Denmark example, an ad recruiting female workers, features a young woman, with a tattoo of the big "M" branded into her lower back; in Denmark being literally branded with a corporate logo is all the rage.



**Figure 2 – Ad at Copenhagen McDonald’s recruiting female employees at – photo
by lead author**

In the Denmark and New Mexico mural (that follows), we explore how McDonald’s nationalizes its corporate history, how it presents the corporation to be viewed by spectators in a particular nation. And, we will assert it is consummating McDonald’s in quite a utopian and romantic narrative, and even rendering a mythological statement to embed corporation in national history.

Three photos of the long mural from Las Cruces, New Mexico are shown next (Figures 1 to 3). We have been informed that this mural appears in other Wal-Mart, McDonald’s, and is therefore a national campaign. The full wall mural is about 25 feet in length, and some seven feet from table top to ceiling.



**Figure 3 - Wal-Mart McDonald's Mural – Left Panel –
Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission**

Figure 3 shows a 'real' mop leaning against the mural, grounding its corporation spectacle in more carnivalesque questioning' two Wal-Mart employees are eating McDonald's food, on their break. See all the smiling ethnic customers and the carhop-worker's smile, all taking a role of the same importance. We can begin to fill-in the gaps with remote contexts and give a philosophical-artistic interpretation that deepens and deconstructs the rational strategic corporation deployment of this mural (Bakhtin, 1986: 160).

The mural (Figure 3) depicts a Speedee production system restaurant, the original site of the first franchised McDonald brothers' restaurant when the first came out with the Golden Arches design: with the roof that slopes down from front to back, an arch on both sides, and a neon sign with Speedee (the first franchise went to Phoenix, AZ). Indeed, the tops of heads of two Wal-Mart workers are visible in this figure. Speedee, the original clown prince, appears in the mural in the style of a corporation hero sitting atop a neon golden arch giving new corporation utterance in the co-creation of McDonald's inside Wal-Mart, which we shall interpret as the ongoing and unfinalized architectonic dialogism. Through this dialogism, McDonald's is creating a semiotic text (mural)

aiming to reach Wal-Mart's multi-ethnic customers who are taking the role of Wal-Mart's heroes. As we said, several of the authors are Mexican, and not fully Americanized; this utopia of ethnic melting pot, is not what we experience.



Figure 4 - Wal-Mart McDonald's Mural – Center Panel – Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission.

The employment of the mural depends upon recognition of cultural symbols (car hops, drive in, vintage cars, poodle skirt and other clothing fashion); the employment is the grasping together of various elements, which, as we shall explore. Our observation is that the symbols are abstracted from quite different time periods. Indeed, there are quite a few historical inaccuracies in the mural. We point these out because the exaggerations allow us to see how McDonald's (in Wal-Mart) is meant to be viewed by spectators. For instance, it shows a 1955 Ford Fairlane and a 1955 Corvette. Specifically, in figure 2 a car hop from period 1938 to 1948 can be observed; a self-service restaurant from period 1948 to 1960; cars from the period after car hops were fired. The carhop was no longer employed by Maurice or Richard McDonald since in 1948 all twenty carhops were sacked. This was a strategy used by McDonald's to attain higher efficiency and lower labor costs. Carhops took 30 to 35 minutes to process an order: the time it took to bring the menu to the car, return to take the order, then to fetch and return the order to the car. Richard and Maurice cut the time to process an order by transforming it to a line of

customers standing and waiting just 15 seconds for burgers at one window, and subsequently, the same customers entering to a second line at the side of the Golden Arches to get their golden French fries. McDonald's is rewriting its own history in an attempt to position itself within Wal-Mart's customers. All the historical inaccuracies shown in the mural are aesthetically consummating (finalizing) Wal-Mart's customers (heroes) because they are sending fictitious messages of a "happy world", making the customers to believe in a cognitive-ethical reality that is utopic (subliminal message).



Figure 5 -Wal-Mart McDonald's Mural – Right Panel – Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission

The mural displays awareness of the mural author (perhaps a painter), and perhaps from both McDonald's and Wal-Mart corporations (their creative staff), that corporation identity does not coincide with historical origins. Most of all the elements are shown in a time that did not exist when various racial groups congregated in harmony in the California drive-in of the 1940s or 1950s. There is utopian equanimity among ethnic and racial customer, car club, teenage carhop, the African-American girl on the bike, and family groups.

In short, the mural represents a chronotope which rewrites the history of the past in order to make a contemporary statement of the equality of all who go to the drive-in in 2004. The chronotope for Bakhtin is an Einstein-metaphor, the relativity of time and

space. In studying globalization and localization, chronotope is highly relevant since it deals with the intrinsic connections of temporal and spatial relationship, and how they are artistically expressed, in this case, in murals (Bakhtin, 1981: 84-85). This time-space is showing the three spheres: the McDonald's corporation sphere of production system, the McDonaldland underworld sphere of cartoons and clowns, and the McDonaldization sphere of generative growth, the spatial spread and diffusion of 30,000 restaurants that is sometimes actively resisted by locals (Boje, Driver, & Cai, 2004).

If we put the text (mural) into remote context (actual photo), we can compare the mural with the historical photo by Witzel (1997: 35): the car hops in the octagonal shaped drive-in hamburger outlet were not dressed in knee-length poodle skirts, as in the mural, but in the shortest mini-skirts ever seen in California (1997: 33); and they wore cowgirl boots, not roller skates as the mural depicts. In the 14th and E Streets location in San Bernardino, CA, the 20 young teenage carhops employed also wore satin uniforms, and serviced 125 cars a night that touched fenders in the McDonald's parking lot (Witzel, 1997: 33). Therefore, half of the cars shown in the mural, being after 1948 to as late as 1957, should not be there at the same time as the carhops. There are other incongruities, and together a pattern emerges. For example, Witzel (1997: 26-27) shows photos in which the Speedee sign read "Speedee Service System". However, in the mural it reads "McDonald's Service System". Witzel reports, "Richard McDonald sketched Speedee as a new hamburger-faced mascot and installed a neon sign featuring the blinking chef roadside" (1997: 35) in the San Bernardino location. In 1948, the McDonald brothers closed the San Bernardino restaurant long enough to fire all 20 car hops, went all self-service, and hired male teens in place of the females (1997: 31).

At first glance, one might dismiss the painted mural, as nostalgic, as revisionist, in mixing historical periods, and full of inaccuracies. This would miss an amazing point about strategic humor, particularly strategic humor that is grotesque. Wal-Mart is the Big Mac that has swallowed McDonald's whole. This language contains not just the restaurant, but all its historical images as well. The mural in and all its historical incongruities, is more than pure denial of the level of racial and ethnic segregation, as well as the use of sexuality (those mini-skirted car hops) to sell burgers and fries. The mural is about the rebirth of the corporation image, not just McDonald's but also Wal-

Mart's. And it is the grotesque humor that strategically rewrites the corporation-history of McDonald's and creates the corporation partnering of the two giants.

Therefore, the mural is a utopian dream, a bit of historical revisionism, that is far from the historical reality of the first McDonald's. The strategically deployed grotesque humor is rich in fantastic, bizarre, and strange incongruities, that upon cursory analysis, reveals a level of absurdity, that is not just ridiculous, but an authorial mask- The mural is grotesque in both, the common and the Bakhtinian usage of the term. In everyday language, grotesque means: (1) an artistic style, as in a painting, which intermingles people with bizarre, even fantastic landscape; (2) a distortion with incongruities in appearance, including manners; (3) ludicrously eccentric or strange, even ridiculous and absurd. The mural is all of these, and also what Bakhtin (1968) describes as grotesque humor. The mural is both types of grotesque, exaggeration of history, exaggeration of the smiles, exaggeration of the diversity then, and of its equanimity now. Eating and drinking to the grotesque humor of corporeal life, the material nature of the corporation bodies stands in ironic contrast to the uniformed workers of both corporations working or eating there, while Las Cruces customers blow their noses into the napkins, taking it all in. They dine beneath a utopian sphere, cleverly rendered, yet as false as a two headed quarter, or as false as what is written about McDonald's on the pages of strategy journal articles, or in strategy textbooks which students are forced to memorize.

It would be entertaining, just comical, were it not for the pretence to be historical 1950s fast food community life; a sphere where everyone smiles, exchanges courtesies with diverse ethnic characters, and all is well. Those who authored this mural, have done violence to history, prostituted their collective strategic dialogue, engaged in grotesque humor, and merged fiction with romantic corporation destruction. The spin is put on history to make the marriage of Wal-Mart and McDonald's triumphant.

Within this McDonald's grotesque humor inside Wal-Mart, the historical reality of the first McDonald's hero, Speedee, co-exists in the same time and space with the present image, Ronald McDonald, the new hero of the organization.



Figure 6 - Wal-Mart McDonald's Speedee Mural – Back Wall – Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission

Inside the same Wal-Mart, another mural (figure 4) shows the clown prince, Speedee, alone in a center stage, being the largest figure on the right wall. Speedee is recreated as the positive grotesque hero of both corporations (McDonald's and Wal-Mart); as mentioned, smiles are emblazoned on all the mural characters (figure 1 to 3), and Speedee gives that knowing wink.



**Figure 7 -Wal-Mart McDonald's Ronald statue & Mirror –
Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission**

In the same area, to the left of the 25 feet mural, an exhibit of a life-size Ronald statue (figure 5) is grasping a Fisher-Price and Disney exhibit of Happy Meal characters from the Lion King 1 1/2 movie. Behind Ronald is a mirror hanging at the height of an adult's head, with Ronald's head embedded in the glass. If you stand before it, your face is superimposed onto Ronald's; and the juxtaposition is both grotesque and bizarre.

The nuances in the mural and its situation inside Wal-Mart reference the carnivalesque, exposing and parodying the hidden meaning behind this corporation artistic spectacle: a mediocre attempt to erase the way it was and the way it is; and then supplant that with the heroic, romantic, utopian corporation triumph. It is not unlike the commissioned paintings by monarchs that reveal the royals to an adoring public, while outside the palace gates, the public asks for their beheading.

The murals' chronotopic pieces of artistry, encompass the time and space of McDonald's corporation history, and its utopian origin, fusing it with its current globalization ambition of expansion. At the same time, the mural is a transcendent experience of McDonald's corporation and McDonaldland spirituality, not only utopian, but also a carnivalesque ascension; including not only one corporation experience, but many (Wal-Mart, Disney, Fisher-Price are also there, figure 5). It is a dialogue of multiple authors (artist, McDonald's corporation, and Wal-Mart, the franchisee, also other corporations). All the characters are smiling: the McDonald's car hop dressed in pink poodle-skirt, the two African-American couples, the African-American girl on the bike, the Hispanic guys showing off their car club wheels, the young and older white couples, the children of varying ethnicity.

Time is stretched and bent in these murals in order to give special meaning to Wal-Mart swallowing McDonald's. Then, there is the here-and-now temporal/spatial context of this McDonald's being embedded in a Super Wal-Mart store. We see this as the clash of two monsters, two monsters with gaping jaws that are out to swallow each other; it is like a remake of Godzilla versus King Kong. The only question is who will swallow the other? At first glance, it appears that Wal-Mart has swallowed McDonald's, but perhaps the reverse is equally true. For instance, in figure 5, when seen in contrast

with Speedee displayed in figures 1 and 4, there is old Ronald, at the margins, barely in the restaurant, to the left of the counter, while Speedee is everywhere. Standing in Ronald's mirror, We see a silent scream, a clown full of cosmic fear and terror; about ready to yell at Speedee.

We acknowledge the murals, and therefore we disturb them. We acknowledge becoming a participant in the corporation event, and we are responsible for dissolving the ready-made message, and obliterating it with a dialogue with more remote and historical contexts. We bring the mural into dialogical contact with contexts (past and contemporary) and we disrupt the imagined rosy future. We personalize the historicity, so the others' words become more dialogic, and the corporation becomes less monologized; we set it into a more polylogic dialogue. Speedee is becoming a fictitious shared hero between Wal-Mart and McDonalds for the customers (readers) of both corporations. At the same time, Ronald McDonald shares the voices of Disney and Fisher Price by distributing their characters.

In case the reader is from the UK. We should explain, that in the last seven years, interviews by the lead author in March 2005 reveal that Grimace and Hamburglar are now almost non-existent there; even Ronald has been regressed chronotopically, no longer an old man, now a young teen, and in birthday ads, not even that old. And in most locations the Ronald statues have been removed. Yet in other parts of the world, such as China, Ronald is called Uncle McDonald's and takes on a very paternalistic role. In Thailand, a Ronald in the traditional palms together gesture, still greets customers. We therefore ask the readers in each country to do some aesthetic and ethical investigation, so that we can begin comparing nation by nation ways in which architectonics mixtures is adjusted to the local tastes, and franchisee strategy. The artistic characters such as clowns (or not) and ways to sell the logic of 'Go Active' global strategy, the story that says Mc Donald's fast food is nutritional, fit for the balanced fast food fitness life style. So each country future studies will have to verify this next proposition. One country's aesthetic maybe considered ethnocentric to another country and this is precisely the topic of our research.

Still, there are symbols in the cohabitation McDonald's / Wal-Mart that creates confusion to the customer. In figure 6, a picture of the McDonald's counter inside Wal-

Mart shows the golden arches of McDonald's exhibited language with a slash running along them.



Figure 8 - Wal-Mart McDonald's M with slash through it – Front Counter – Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission

Without some historical research we had no idea why there was a slash through the golden arches. Was it an artist mistake, a stop M? Or, was it something to do with Wal-Mart, the mini-McDonald's?

The reader may well question how if we only analyze a mirror, some brochures, a talk show transcript, and two clowns can we possibly justify using language concepts from Bakhtinian dialogisms. However, we believe in order to engage with theories of dialogism, which are exceedingly complex, we need to focus on unpacking layers of meaning, and our rather simple example of how a mural positions its ways of seeing; “the art of any period tends to serve the ideological interests of the ruling class” (Berger, 1973). That ruling class in 2005, in New Mexico, is composed of global corporations.

In this quite exploratory study, we read the symbols present in the fast food store inside of Wal-Mart, questioning what every symbol means in relation to the history of not only Mc Donald's and Wal-Mart, but to what it says about class.

We interviewed employers and managers about the slash through the Golden Arches at the front counter we stamped in the front counter. Employees did not know, customers did not know and managers did not know. They appear to be taught the language skills to take orders, but not how to interpret the art on the counter. But there is no magical story here. Richard Mc Donald's in 1946 put the slash to the Golden Arch to symbolize a restaurant design that survives until the 1950s (Witzel, 1994/1997). The slash symbolizes the slant roof design that became for the McDonald brothers (Richard & Maurice) a corporate logo. We didn't ask Mc Donald's corporate executives, because it is obvious this meaning, that managers and employees are not trained to recognize; their task is simply pushing the register buttons which have fast food icons, not even numbers.

Architectonics can be summarized as cognitive, ethic, and aesthetic planes of systemicalness expression. So far, the cognitive-ethic and aesthetic aspects of McDonald's corporation and McDonaldland, within its co-habitation with Wal-Mart, have been clearly exposed by analyzing the murals. Nevertheless, the cognitive-ethical aspect of the McDonalization sphere has not been clearly portrayed. In an ethical sense, the first mural shown in figure 1 to 3 apparently delineates an organization that does not support racism or make physical, ethnical, or economical distinctions among its employees and customers. In what extent this depiction of organizational ethics shown in the murals is actually real and indeed taking place?

At the beginning of the paper, we called McDonalization to all the social pressure, external and local, that might make McDonald's to become truly aware of the well being of the society by embracing its potential end existing customers as humans and not only as a source of profit. Nevertheless, it seems this is not achieved yet. It is undeniable that McDonald's have heard the social voices and have introduced into their organization "healthier" meals than the ones originally offered. This heteroglossia has lead McDonald's to address the social voices by changing physical characteristics and adding stylistic characteristics into its characters (i.e. Ronald McDonald, Hamburglar, Grimace). However, the question is not how much did the organization has changed its décor context to please a responsive and conscious society, but what is the purpose of the change: a true search for social well being, or only a strategy to make profits.

Figure 7 shows a notice posted by the McDonald's aimed to the local customers.



Figure 9 -Wal-Mart McDonald's Sign – Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission

The rhetorical dispute is a strategic dialogue that demonstrates a dispute in which it is important to gain victory over the opponent, not to approach the truth (Bakhtin, 1986: 52). Here the opponent, rather than being other fast food restaurants, is the customer, the addressee of the mural. This is polyphony without an equal treatment component of Bakhtin's concept, a polyphonic dialogue with ultimate ambition, where the corporation, the customer, and the artist are in worlds of their own (151). This mural (figure 7) lies "in the border between the ethical and aesthetic" (150). This is persuasive rhetoric, whose incongruities would escape Las Cruces customers, but not the sharp eyes of McDonald's executives; they take Speedee's history quite seriously. The mural (figure 3 to 5) is a clever allegory, a story in which people, cars, clowns, poodle skirts, are out of place, where there is a hidden meaning and an important moral principle being co-authored by a team of writers. The characters in the mural do not speak, yet they are laughing, ironically, at the situation they have been placed within. Speedee is laughing in belly roars, and as corporations try to elevate themselves to the heroic platform. This ready-made communication is all too easy to decode.



Figure 9 -Wal-Mart Employee before the Speedee Mural – Photo by Michael Keller, used by permission

“How may I help you?” reads the sign on the back of the Wal-Mart workers’ uniform that attend the McDonald’s counter. For at the counter (not in photo), the workers are not smiling, nor are they using the standard greeting; the specific form that the co-authors of the mural are employing (Bakhtin, 1986: 46). In addition, the workers that turns into McDonald’s customers at break times do not show smiling peaceful and cozy faces. Thus, the mural dissolves the boundaries between the characters and the masked authors, the writers of this mural.

In sum, this brief review is a critical study of the co-habitation of two giant international businesses. We explored the boundaries, the scope and overlap of three necessary aspects: aesthetics, ethics, and cognitive into two critical perspectives: the dialectic and the dialogic. We elaborated not only a grotesque method, but the polyphonic method of architectonics, the mixing of architecture, philosophy, voice, and plot line; putting text into remote and contemporary contexts. It is a critique of the mainstream corporation strategy literature, which is always making out McDonald’s and Wal-Mart to be rational, Weberian, just super heroes for the business college. Hopefully, our

juxtaposition helps to dispel that myth. For both corporations appropriate humor and carnival to temper and shape rational to their own will; both stretch in time in order to accomplish spatial proliferation.

We have an opportunity to deconstruct the architectonics of the visual/verbal narrative redendered in the organizations language and apparent reality, in the case of McDonalds' through its murals and other decorations, in order to engage in a more critical international research perspective. We can show the mythic abstraction and power of corporation appropriation of chronotopic self-heroic masks, and we critical theorists can plot a more collective and organic, perhaps more sustainable chronotope.

Chronotopic dialogism intersects with architectonic dialogism. The cognitive pronouncements change in reaction to situations, such as a disparaging hamburger remark on an Ophra Winfrey's show, lawsuits by parents and mothers whose children are obese and they seek to blame to that to the fast food industry. McDonald's is able to transform its characterization from fatty food provider to fitness coach, being transparent about nutritional content, and giving advice, as if from Ophra to balance your children appetite for beef or chicken with a little yogurt. In the mural, the chronotope is a romantic one, where the melting pot is quite idyllic, and everyone behaves according to a chivalric code; to those of us living in New Mexico, who are of Mexican decent, we dispute the melting pot storyline.

Chronotopicity is the word *chronos* which means time and *topos* as space. So in the mirror example there is an aesthetic portrayal of time past and time present and a message of progress toward happy employment, happy workers and diverse racial and ethnic groups eating and working in cars in perfect harmony. A utopian American dream: the melting pot. Once again in the Ronald mirror (figure 7) there is an architectonics of décor with cognitive pronouncement in the images and in their gestures of Ronald to the much older clown, Speedee (figure 6). Finally, what is the ethics of making this great sweeping mural, re-historicism of not only McDonald's past but also American past as if harmony always was and always will be. It includes a very romantic look at car hops, when they were all fired to make way for all male employment (between 1948 through the late 1950s).

We beg the readers' patience. We understand that it is difficult to engage with many of the ideas of Bakhtin, and see their interplay in works of corporate art, that have been treated by organization studies as absolutely mere decoration. We believe that by taking a very simple example from McDonald's which everywhere is; any reader can repeat the steps of the methodology and learn to look at the interrelationships between ethical claims and their manifestation in aesthetic material and textual material available to anyone. In this way, we take the complex theory such as architectonics and its relation with chronotopicity and show with a little practice and a lot of patience a new approach to understanding the dynamics of corporate systems can be achieved.

Readers may challenge that our analysis is much too sophisticated for the material; but we think that challenge falls by the wayside, when you look at how art of the museum is analyzed in much the same way (Berger, 1973). We remind the readers that any country's art is subject to disputes among art critics; the same is true of corporation's art.

We do not believe that Mc Donald's corporate realizes the extent to which ethnocentrism is present in its global strategy. We suspect consumers in other countries (hopefully) can see through its propaganda machine of 55 grams of fat in a super size hamburger can be worked off the body following the advise of Ophra Winfrey fitness trainer. This again is subject to verification in project by other researchers, be direct, we seek counter studies showing ethnocentricity in language expression through various modes of architectonics to show just how blind and arrogant a corporation can be in assuming a romantic story of fast food can be stretched to another country.

So the challenge is to look at two corporations inhabiting in the same time-space and having to work out differences in their architectonic language systems. This is why the ability to study two global giant corporations in our small town is something we believe can be replicated by other researchers who find similar examples in their own community. This we believe is a test of our theory and our explanation is this replicability.

CONCLUSIONS

McDonald's inhabits Wal-Mart, but each corporation is also swallowing the other. Literally, Wal-Mart has swallowed McDonald's. But, as well, McDonald's, with its gaping jaws, is swallowing Wal-Mart: McDonald's orders can be placed at each check-out counter, a separate line awaits the busy Wal-Mart shopper, who can pick up their order on their way to the car. Speedee is the appropriate clown prince of this grotesque shopping banquet, since speed is of the essence at Wal-Mart and McDonald's. The two giants are undergoing a metamorphosis, a cycle of degradation and renewal, a descent into, guided into the netherworld by clown, fool, and rogue, in order to accomplish regeneration and renovation of their corporeal bodies.

Future time is ephemeral, unformed in contrast to time past and present; future time is just less concrete, so a mural allows the borrowing of concreteness from times past (and present) and stretches these temporal phenomena to give a density and weightiness to future time, to the marriage of McDonald's and Wal-Mart, using the artist to re-narrate history. And this temporal repositioning, this making future more concrete, less ephemeral is also accomplished by the vertical cycle of descent (degradation) and ascent (renewal), through the semiotics of a mural (re) casting the Golden Age of the Golden Arches, as an antenarrative (Boje, 2001) of the future. In this way the chronotope is accomplished, stretching the horizontal axis of time, to invoke another-worldly verticality, and establish a meeting place for two giants in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

This is a future which never existed before, a historical inversion, a vertical descent to netherworld, an eternal space outside time, the beginning of localization of the eternal values of two giant corporations. Yet the future is emptied out, moving from left (car hop and Speedee) to right (garage), across the mural of the Golden Arches, ending in urbanscape. This is a future fused with a strange being, ontology of netherworld, an inverted past/present, and a utopic conception of ethnic harmony. In this fictive imagination the full potential, spatially and temporally, of the two giants is being forged.

The mural is also a mask, one penetrated by the broom, mop, and heads of Wal-Mart workers in figure 1, and the worker wearing the corporation greeting in figure 8: "How May I Help You?". The broom and mop train the enchantment and corporation glorification of the mural, grounding it in resistance, juxtaposing a real-life chronotope of degraded work with the chronotope of epic corporation heroization, presenting both in

the corporation-provided public meeting place, where mural is intertextual to corporations, where globalization is intertextual to localization, where Ronald's eternal cosmic scream can be heard in the silence of the mirror, as he looks in horror as Speedee dethrones the corporation prince, reasserting his claim to the crown. The transformation of a clown from Speedee to Ronald, and back, has enormous significance, whose essence is probably not grasped by Wal-Mart or McDonald's; this is a meaning from the "deep recesses of pre-class folklore up to the Renaissance" (Bakhtin, 1981: 165), which is recreated in contemporary Las Cruces, New Mexico.

These corporation giants are playing with several chronotopes: (1) folkloric pre-class chronotope of rogue, clown, and fool; (2) heroic epic chronotope of a monological revision history; (3) the netherworld of McDonaldland; (4) corporation biography. This to us is an amazing and bizarre corporation accomplishment, a multi-layered chronotope as heteroglossic language. It is also what Bakhtin (1984) calls the Castle. In the novels of Stendhal and Balzac appear a place inside the castle that is the living room as a place where the dialogues become exceptionally important and where the characters, ideas and passions of the heroes are revealed. "It is in here where a visible and concrete form of the omnipresent power of the new owner of life is revealed: money." (p. 456) Is it possible to say that now a days instead of having living rooms in castles we have restaurants and supermarkets?

And we are inspired by Bakhtin (1981: 1969) where, as critical theorist, he offers us activist-academics a way to proceed: It is necessary to destroy and rebuild the entire false picture of the world, to sunder the false hierarchical links between objects and ideas, to abolish the divisive ideational strata.

How can we as academics liberate McDonald's and Wal-Mart, let them enter into free unions with more organic, less monstrous relations with the natural and human world? There are here-and-now connections of these corporations to the world of nature and labor that are being masked by the murals, by all the advertising and clownery of these giant corporations. The false associations, the historical revisions, the attempts to weld a more steely future, these can be deconstructed to bring the giants into proximity with the consequences of their generative world-wide growth, the materiality of their corporation contagion. For now all this is successfully covered over or masked by a

transcendent, epic corporation heroization. In figure 5, Ronald and ourselves, look in the mirror and see grotesque realism, where the lofty and spiritual image is unmasked, where hyperbolization and transcendent aesthetic nor corporation mythology is providing camouflage. In the mainstream of the Academy of Management, globalization is depicted as positive growth, as inevitable future. Globalization, as well as the necessity of Gargantua (Rabelais), are scribed into an affirmative and appreciate epic narrative.

From the necessary conditions to have a dialogic organization, it is evident that when the hero within an organization is fictitious, the result is also fictitious and therefore can not be dialogic. An example is McDonalds and Disney because both have fictitious heroes who cannot be developed as humans in their wholeness. McDonalds created Ronald McDonald and Speedy as heroes who represent symbolic characters and who cannot be self-determined, self-conscious and much less aesthetically unconsummated. Disney also created their own characters like Mickey Mouse, Goofy, Pluto, etceteras, who never die because they are represented by humans who are replaced as they become older or incapable of performing the characters. Therefore, the persons who perform those characters cannot be self-conscious or self-determined even though the characters (Mickey Mouse, Pluto) are aesthetically unconsummated.

Organizations can be helped to become more ethical citizens, by holding them answerable for their aesthetic claims. This ethics goes beyond the logic of responsibilities and rights. It is an ethics of learning to live together with an interest on values, attitudes, civics and spirituality (Pondy, 1976). Negotiated contracts are intended to be ethical contracts that over time de-hierarchizes and provide mechanisms of social governance.

We believe the paper may be in the interest to an international audience for the following reasons: First, one nation finds a convincing appeal to child humor such as clowns and coloring books etc, maybe quite differently received. In the present study three of the authors are from Mexico and offer the following example: (Rejection of Mc Donald's a challenge to the kind of diet). We predict that others who stop to critically review the artistic claims about will find similar horror (they will be horrified as we are). We are not reverent about Mc Donald's. Second, by developing a more complex understanding of the betweenness of various spheres of research we begin to ask rather straightforward questions. Who is answerable for the ethical claims made in these

restaurants? How are the multiplicities of types of expression shapes into something more or less persuasive? And finally, Can we be critical of the system of knowledge that is being presented to our children?

We are no longer able to read with facility the coded messages designed to ooze into the child consciousness. Each image can also be read as a hellish to their parent to mollify their concerns heard in the media and in Ophra Winfrey fast food can be entirely danger to their children's health.

Finally, it may be time to de-Americanize the architectonics in Mc Donald's globalization project no to help them but to stop them. When fast food enters life of the communities it displaces slower more convivial forms of socializing for the families. It is time to question the propaganda machine, its ethnocentricity and to become literate in a critical sense, the architectonics being manipulated in each locality or in each site of the world. In the present study we have one site we analyzed as an example. Our theory is not complete until researchers and critics and other nations subject architectonics there to scrutiny. As our final comment three researchers from Mexico and one American have engaged in the architectonics of Mc Donald's and Wal-Mart in New Mexico and we found white lies.

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ⁱ Howard Lyman on Oprah Winfrey talk show transcript
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